AMAU**ACADEMY**

How to learn Arabic Quickly

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu,

We pray that this message reaches you
in good health and imaan.

On behalf of our AMAU Academy team, we would like
to present to you these compiled notes that we have
prepared to make your journey with us a lot easier.

Our notes are compiled by the AMAU Admin team
and have not been comprehensively checked
by a teacher.

If you find any errors or corrections that need
to be made, kindly inform us via our email
helpdesk@amauacademy.com

May Allah make our paths toward seeking
beneficial knowledge easy and kindle our hearts
with sincerity and gratefulness
towards Him.

Jazakumullahu Khayran

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The Problem

Chapter One

There are many people who have a desire to learn the Arabic language. Those who want to connect to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, who want to be able to converse with people in Arabic, who want to be able to understand this amazing religion which is an important part of our religion.

However, it is fair to say that many are struggling when it comes to learning Arabic. No matter what syllabus someone chooses to follow, the tips presented will benefit everyone.

> *One should also keep in mind that completing a particular course or curriculum does not guarantee perfection of the language.*

An example is that the Famous Madinah books are related to grammar, reading, expression and other aspects such as Fiqh. Also, one should note that the students at the Islamic University are also taught some side books apart from these series and they are constantly exposed to the Arabic language in their day to day needs.

A student should observe what the objective end goal of a book is, such as the key topics focused throughout the book. For example, there are books which deal with grammar rules alone while other books deal with familiarising the student with conversational Arabic.

These book series are one of the ways students use for learning and none of these books are perfect. For example, the Madinah books are useful for people who want to further study Islām but are not as helpful for holding daily conversations.

Being aware of these aspects helps the student to understand what they will gain from a particular series they study.

Advice

Chapter Two

> *A key aspect to observe when choosing a book is to identify the intended type of students that these books were written for.*

There are books which are completely focused on a student of knowledge, other books which focus on tourists to get basic conversations or children's story books for kids to get started with the Arabic language.

If a book is written for a full-time student who is committed to learning Arabic then there is no urgency to teach certain topics. For example, in the Madinah books the author delays certain matters that are important such as verbs because the student will pick these up in their day-to-day life through interacting with people. For part-time students, this might be a problem and a student can become frustrated.

In regards to studying at Physical Institutes, there are many advantages for people who can travel and have free time, but this might not be possible for everything as people may have financial troubles, need to work or are not able to travel etc. One of the disadvantages of these institutes is that there is a high barrier of entry. Additionally, some people delay their learning of the Arabic Language because they feel like attending a physical institute will solve their inability to learn the language, however, it does not.

Online courses are being utilised by many people and these are very accessible. However, despite them being accessible and affordable, students can find it difficult to remain committed. Some online courses may have their own syllabus, but many a time they rely on the same books such as the Madinah book or al-Arabiyya Bayna Yadayk series.

Living in an Arabic speaking country has its pros and cons. Sometimes a student goes to live in an Arabic speaking country to find that everyone wants to speak to them in English. These issues can be dealt with and some hacks will be shared in further episodes.

Types of Arabic

Chapter Three

There are broadly three types of Arabic and they can be further subcategorised:

1 Colloquial Arabic

Learning this type of Arabic begins with different dialects and accents. These are the Saudi accent, Emirate accent, Kuwaiti accent etc. within the Gulf religion. Within them there are other dialects and accents which people of language study at an expert level.

The problem with accents is that it might not be for someone who starts to learn the language because it varies throughout the world. For example, a person who knows the Colloquial Arabic of the Gulf struggles in conversing with people from Egypt. The same applies to the region of Levant.

Regarding colloquial Arabic, if someone wants to learn it this way, one does not necessarily have to understand multiple accents and dialects. If a person is able to learn the main accent and dialect of a particular region then they can understand what is being said even if they move to another country within that region.

If a person wants to learn Arabic for an Islamic reason, then not all scholars speak classical Arabic. Rather, some speak in their local dialects which demonstrates the need for one to learn Colloquial Arabic to a level where they can gain familiarity.

2 Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)

MSA is Arabic without strict grammar rules. It is supposed to be Modern Standard Language which can be shared by everybody in all of the Arabic-speaking countries.

The advantages of MSA is that it is easier to learn because there are less complex grammar rules, however, sometimes they leave off or break some of the complicated grammar rules which exist in Classical Arabic. MSA is not very far off from Standard Arabic, however, it is not enough for one to study the Qur'an, Sunnah and classical Arabic books. MSA can help a student in their early stages of learning Arabic.

3 Classical Arabic

Classical Arabic is the language of the Qur'an and Sunnah. It has complicated grammar rules, requires high precision and a vast range of vocabulary. This is the path scholars recommend for a student of knowledge who is seriously studying the religion.

For the students who learn Arabic part-time and struggle to understand Classical Arabic, they can lower their language standard to MSA which will help them achieve a target and they can always add the grammar rules to what they have learnt.

If one is learning Arabic for work then the dialect might be really important for them as they may be dismissed by people if they speak Classical or MSA.

Therefore, the type of Arabic that needs to be learn will depend on the person and their situation. Most people who want to learn Arabic for religious reasons will aim at Classical Arabic as their final goal.

Let us provide an example scenario. The average Arab child who is raised by Arab parents learns the language from their parents. This language which they learn is Colloquial and not Classical. If these children want to learn Classical Arabic they will learn grammar rules and build upon what they already know from Colloquial Arabic. These children then excel. Therefore, if a person struggles with the complex rules of Classical Arabic, they can start in a similar manner and build upon it. This allows the person to feel that they are achieving something and are not stuck in one place.

Also, one should not dismiss the less formal type of Arabic simply because it does not match the standard of a student of knowledge, rather, they should keep their options open. An example is GCSE Arabic for British people.

Language Acquisition

Chapter Four

Second language acquisition theory is utilised by people to learn languages and there are many benefits. There is a style of learning which is very effective for picking up a second language which is called Corpus learning. This requires one to learn through having a corpus i.e. a collection of examples and reading materials which are graded and suited for the level of the student. The student utilises these materials to advance in their journey of learning the language.

Al-Ajrūmiyyah is a text for those whose first language is Arabic or those who are fluent in Arabic. If a student who does not have any base in Arabic studies this book then they end up struggling instead of improving their language. Therefore, choosing the right material for a specific student is a matter which can save the student a lot of time. According to statistics, Arabic takes three times longer to learn than French for an English student due to the differences in script and fewer common words between the languages.

There are many innovative ways for learning the English language and these techniques do work, however, this is not the case when it comes to Arabic. Hence, we can use the techniques used by people to learn English as a second language in our journey of learning Arabic. This does not mean that we do not stick to the classical texts, but we can use these as a preparation before getting our hands on the classical texts.

Challenges

Chapter Five

Challenges

Chapter Five

1   *Time and Commitment*

As mentioned previously Arabic takes a longer time to learn as a second language. Due to this, there may be issues related to commitment as this is a matter which required a long-term commitment. One needs to assess how much time they can allocate for learning Arabic and study accordingly. They should be consistent and have discipline rather than being inconsistent.

When learning a language, there are some things which can be done on a regular basis and others which may not require regular attention. One needs to find a way to learn Arabic by incorporating it into our day-to-day lives.

2   *Courses Not Personally Designed*

Students may struggle with a course because that course was designed for someone who has a different standard, free time and level of commitment. Often, courses are not designed for the individual student's amount of time and commitment. This is frequently encountered by people who study the Madinah course because it is designed for students who have a lot of time and full commitment.

3   *Three Languages or One*

From the obstacles to learning Arabic is the issue of three languages or one. The student needs to know which type of Arabic language, from the three mentioned above, that they want to learn. This depends upon the situation of the individual person and the environment which they are in. When it comes to academic studies, the more a person immerses themselves in a language the more likely it is that they are going to learn it. This is one of the reasons why people learn English quickly because it is so prevalent. However, it can be difficult to immerse oneself in Arabic because of the three types of language. One of the greatest challenges in learning Arabic is that Shaytān strives to prevent people from learning Arabic because through learning Arabic people become closer to Allāh and have a greater understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

4   *Arabic Scripts*

One of the obstacles to learning Arabic is the Arabic script, however, this is not usually a problem as most Muslims around the world are able to read the Arabic script as they can recite the Qur'an. There are different styles of Arabic script; some decorative and others plain. It is better to start with the 'Uthmānī script which is the least decorative script of the Qur'an. This aids in reading other Arabic material such as newspapers. If one tends to read from decorative scripts then it may become difficult to read classical texts.

Divide and Conquer

Chapter Six

When learning the language one has to take a hybrid approach and to utilise what is available. The goal is to begin speaking Arabic and the best course is the one which works for the individual.

There are four distinct areas of language that need to be observed independently. A unified approach to learn all these areas might not be as effective as when each of these is learnt independently.

The four areas are:

1   *Vocabulary*

2   *Rules of the language*

3   *Corpus learning from practical real-world examples*

4   *Practice*

The reason for dividing it into different categories it to make learning the language manageable and to identify the exact area where a student may be struggling to make progress. For example, a student may be lagging behind in grammar rules. If this is the case, they can focus on that area whilst still progressing in vocabulary.

There are a number of courses which focus intensively on grammar while others are based on conversation and vocabulary. Identifying these aspects can aid a person to focus on the subcategory they desire.

Vocabulary

Chapter Seven

Rules of Learning Vocabulary

Chapter Seven

1   *Ease, consistence and learn everywhere*

One should ensure that they make the learning process easy, consistent and that they perform it everywhere. One should try to learn as little as three words a day. If a person is consistent upon this they will be surprised at the number of words they will have learnt by the end of the year. A student can increase the number to five or ten when they are consistent for a longer period of time. Ultimately, one should be consistent and simple for the learner to enjoy.

Also, one should use flashcards, post-its and other methods to learn words. Through this, one can glance at these words while they go about their day.

2   *Vocabulary sources*

One should utilise a wide range of vocabulary sources which matter to the individual. A student should explore other sources of vocabulary on top of the vocabulary in their course material. If a student has a wide range of vocabulary this helps in understanding the language. This can range from; classical Arabic texts, MSA, newspapers and poetry. Furthermore, the student can prioritise based on the purpose they are learning the language for.

3   *Be intelligent about how one learns*

If a student learns plurals and verbs alongside vocabulary then this will save them a lot of time and they will proceed further in their learning. Whenever one learns a singular then they should try to learn the plural form alongside it. This will benefit the student when they actually go on to study plurals. This is because Arabic plurals can be difficult as they do not follow easy patterns like in English where you add a 's' at the end etc.

The orientalists have made the topic of verbs seem difficult, but in reality, it is easy for one who is learning Arabic. Learning verb forms for all the tenses adds to the vocabulary of a student. Therefore, a student should try to memorise these even if they do not have knowledge of them.

4   *Learn how to use a dictionary*

Arabic dictionaries are very unique because many Arabic dictionaries are ordered by root letters. Gaining efficiency in utilising Arabic dictionaries comes with practice and it is always handy to know how to use one. As a student progresses they should aim to reduce the amount of English which they rely upon.

5   *Learn how to use a dictionary*

It is a good idea to have a personal vocabulary notebook, wherein one notes down names of things which they come across on a day-to-day basis such as cars, street lights, tables, chairs, phones etc. Within no time they will have a custom vocabulary book based on what they have observed.

Organising the Vocabulary Book

Chapter Eight

Arabic words are typically made up of three or four letters in a particular order. They may have more letters at the beginning or the end, but the base three or four letters convey a certain meaning. This meaning will be related to other words which have the same root words.

For example, ك ت ب consists of the letters ك, ت, and ب. When these letter are present in this order then it conveys a certain meaning which is related to writing. So كاتب which has a ا after the ك means a writer. مكتوب, there is a م in front and و in the middle which means something that is written. مكتب is a place where writing takes places, like a desk or an office.

All classical Arabic dictionaries are formulated according to this concept. Therefore, if one was looking for مكتب, it would not be found under the letter م but under ك ت ب. This aids greatly in understanding words which have the same root word. Using this concept, one is able to organise their vocabulary books in a way which will provide great benefit as it will help the learner to pick up patterns which will be useful when studying sciences such as morphology.

The benefit of learning this concept is with one word, the learner will be able to map most of the other words related to them. Getting used to these patterns helps to speed up the understanding and one can then make educated guesses about the meaning of a word.

Rules of the Language

Chapter Nine

Rules of the language are not only restricted to grammar. Rather, there are other rules such as making verbs, constructing sentences etc. These come under the Qawā'id of the language. An example of a course which completely focuses on teaching the rules of the language is the infamous Madinah book series.

An issue many students face is that they may possess many rules of the language but they still struggle to hold a basic conversation. A student should not focus solely on many rules whilst making short progress, rather, a student should master a rule completely by learning it and putting it in to practice.

In the beginning, it is better to avoid classical Arabic rules as they are stricter and can cause difficulties to a student who may not be at that level. These are necessary for understanding the Qur'an and classical texts, but if a beginner finds it difficult they can move on and approach it at a later date.

The disadvantage of skipping a complex rule is that if this is done frequently it will add up. However, if there is a particular rule which is preventing the student from progressing, then it is worth skipping it and returning to it when the student has greater foundational understanding. There is nothing wrong with taking time to get used to a rule instead of memorising and collecting many rules without putting them in to practice.

Corpus Learning

Chapter Ten

The idea behind Corpus Learning is simple, A genuine collection of material in the language which is selected according to the level of the student. This is a major method of how people around the world learn English as a second language. The major advantage of this method is that it puts the student's vocabulary, grammar rules and rules of the Language to practice.

To see people speak about a real world object, for example, a key, makes a big difference in their understanding. The grammar and other rules can be learnt just by listening or writing down examples from this material.

The material utilised should be a wide range of media, preferably written materials at this form produces the most benefit. If one does not have access, then they can find examples from videos or audios. One should bookmark resources that they can benefit from later in their journey. Some example are; newspapers, online libraries, YouTube channels, and twitter posts. It is very important to match the level of material to the level of language of the student to ensure progress is achieved.

If the student does not have access, then a good place to start are children's resources. Some examples include; children's books, videos, cartoons etc. as long as they are Halāl. The reason for this recommendation is so that the level of the language is relatively easy. These methods lead to amazing results because it allows the student to notice progress which allow them to remain motivated and hungry. It also allows them to gain more in a shorter period of time. The idea is to progress to the higher levels in the children's series after being comfortable at the base level.

The student should also ensure that the material is relevant to what they want to learn. For example, if the course is focused on Islamic studies, all the examples will return to Islam and seeking knowledge. This may lead to a gap in the students understanding of the other aspects of language.

With regards to grammar, one should primarily look for examples that match the level of the student. This is because it can be difficult and therefore one does not want to hinder the progress of a student. As mentioned previously, the student should aim to master each rule and apply it to a wide range of examples.

Practice

Chapter Eleven

Practice

Chapter Eleven

The final element is to put the vocabulary, rules of the language and corpus learning into practice. Practice entails writing, reading, listening and speaking.

It is important for a student to understand that making mistakes is common for anyone on this journey. Mistakes need to be made in order to learn from corrections.

The student needs to be corrected because there is no benefit in someone who allows their student to make mistakes without correcting. Therefore, it is important to find peers with whom one can practice and learn from each other. One should ensure that they match their practice to the type of goal they have set. For example, if one wants to learn Colloquial Arabic only then they should practice accordingly. It should be known that there are a number of people who learn Classical Arabic but continue to speak in their local dialect. This student should ensure that their expectations are realistic because they will not achieve what they want if they do not practice accordingly.

Another tip is to speak about a topic which is not generally spoken about and gain exposure to different accents because this is a good challenge that a student can use to test their abilities.

The student should make sure to practice writing and speaking; whether this is through online or offline sources. There are opportunities for speaking to people from other countries at the comfort of your home, just make sure that the method used is permissible.

The student should make sure that they are progressing in each of the elements individually and collectively. An obstacle in a particular element should not hinder the progress in the other areas.

Make the journey as enjoyable and as rewarding as possible. This allows the student to feel that they are progressing towards that which is beneficial for them in this world and the next. Allāh knows best.

To ensure your progress,
we recommend that you take
this self evaluation quiz based
on the notes and video
series that you have
just completed.

Attempt Quiz

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